

# Business Analysts

## *Bridging the Gap*



**B**usiness Intelligence is about digging into the mountain of data that companies have acquired over the years and using it to make sound business decisions. Sounds easy, right? But the skills required to run an organization and give it vision and goals are very different from the skills needed to organize and maintain a database. The role of the business analyst is to bridge the gap between these two departments by understanding enough of both to get the job done. Exactly what that means varies between organizations with a range of job duties and experience needed.

Some core skills apply to most business analyst positions. Each skill can be associated with specific job duties as shown in the chart. The required skills vary from company to company. At one end of the spectrum is the more technical business reporting analyst who focuses on the technical side of the database being involved in data modeling projects and has an advanced working knowledge of Structured Query Language (SQL). At the other end is the more management-oriented business management analyst whose role is more like that of a business consultant performing workflow analysis and problem solving on work process issues. Most business analysts fall somewhere in between, with the primary focus of their work as the liaison with business users and IT to ensure that system enhancements fill business needs.

Finding numbers on business analysts is difficult to do because the positions are so varied. Looking at the ends of the spectrum both computer systems analysts and management analysts have been designated as Five Star occupations\* in Utah with new growth accounting for the increase in positions over the next ten years. Projected job growth from 2004 to 2014 in these occupations is 48 percent and 32 percent, respectively.

As the need for business analysts grows, standards are being developed and professional organizations are emerging. The International Institute of Business Analysis (IIBA) offers certification programs to become a Certified Business Analysis Professional (CBAP). Certification includes at least five years of documented experience in four of six defined work areas as well as a formal exam. While the CBAP does not require a bachelor's degree, many employers are looking for candidates with degrees in computer science, business, or economics. They also want experience within an industry such as healthcare, telecommunications, or banking, and experience with database software packages such as Business Objects. ⓘ

*\*Five Star Occupations are those expected to have the strongest employment growth and high wages.*

### COMPUTER SYSTEMS ANALYSTS

### MANAGEMENT ANALYSTS

Employment	Utah	US	Utah	US
Current Employment	4,690	487,000	2,920	605,000
Projected Employment	6,930	640,000	3,840	727,000
Annual Openings	280	21,000	130	20,000
Salary				
Annual Inexperienced	\$43,810	--	\$46,710	--
Annual Median	\$62,850	\$69,760	\$68,450	\$68,050

Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services

## Knowledge, Skills and Abilities for Business Analysts

SKILL	JOB DUTY	IIBA KNOWLEDGE AREA
Communication		
Written Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepare and conduct training sessions for business end users</li><li>• Technical writing</li><li>• Conduct meetings with business users and IT staff to determine project requirements</li><li>• Elicit business requirements and frame in terms of technical specifications</li></ul>	Communication of Requirements
Verbal Communication		Elicitation of Requirements
Facilitation		
Interviewing		
Analysis		
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Extract data from data warehouse, validate its accuracy, and perform necessary statistical analysis</li><li>• Determine project requirements</li><li>• Conduct gap analysis and identify solutions</li></ul>	Analysis and Documentation of Requirements
Business Analysis		Solution Assessment and Validation
Workflow Analysis		
Management		
Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Administer project, track progress, coordinate with stakeholders, report to project charter</li><li>• Conduct root cause analysis and problem solving meetings</li></ul>	Planning and Management of Requirements
Problem Resolution		Enterprise Analysis
Technical		
SQL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quality Control</li><li>• Design business reports</li><li>• Give training on system enhancements</li><li>• Document project specifications</li><li>• Participate in design discussions determining data structure</li></ul>	Analysis and Documentation of Requirements
Excel		Elicitation of Requirements
Access		
Crystal Reports		
Data modeling		

Sources: A sampling of job postings for business analysts collected February 27, 2008; [www.theiiba.org](http://www.theiiba.org)

For more information and to see other five star occupations go to:

- Utah 2004-2014 Top "Five Star" Jobs by Training Level at <http://jobs.utah.gov/jsp/wi/utalmis/oimorejobs.do>
- The Utah Economic Data Viewer at <http://jobs.utah.gov/jsp/wi/utalmis> click on Utah Occupational Explorer and search on SOC codes 13-1111 and 15-1051.
- The IIBA web site at [www.theiiba.org](http://www.theiiba.org)

